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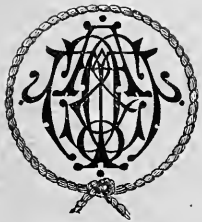
SONGS ADRIFT:

OR,

GEMS FROM AN OLD SCRAP BOOK.

A HOLIDAY OFFERING.



"UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES."

PHILADELPHIA:
C. A. MECASKEY & CO.
No. 908 CHESTNUT STREET.
1873.

Gift
Pa. Soc. of the Colonial
Dames of America
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COMPLIMENTS OF
C. A. MECASKEY & CO.
908 CHESTNUT STREET,
PHILADELPHIA.

"SONGS ADRIFT."

It is surprising how many really good and stirring poems go floating up and down the currents of the great sea of literature, with never an author to claim them, and never a publisher to gather them into a volume. They take their start in a corner of a weekly paper, or deep in the recesses of a magazine, are scissored from one paper to another, and at last find quiet resting places in somebody's scrap-book. They are usually the one or two heart-stirring songs of a poet who is never able to match them afterwards, and who, in despair, abandons them to their fate; but sometimes they are the isolated ones which the world selects to remember, while the volume containing their duller companions slumbers unread on a forgotten shelf; and sometimes they are the only songs which some master-mind of prose has permitted itself to sing; but in any case, they have no home, no associations, no harbor of refuge—literary waifs on a sea which has shipwrecked their companions by thousands, they belong to the finder; and even the king can scarcely hope to apply to them the law of FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

Mainly of this sort are the scraps collected in this little volume. A few of them are by well-known authors, a few more by rising ones, but the majority are to be credited to that convenient authority, "Mr. Anonymous." So far as we know, none of them—or but one or two, at most—are contained in a published edition of their author's works; and as we could name the writers of so few, we have deemed it best to withhold the author's name, even where it was known.

The Poems are from a scrap-book, and are given here as they stood there, without order or arrangement, but just as the periodical currents drifted them in. Like the emotions they express, they will be found to relate to almost every phase of life and life's experience. SOMEBODY will be grateful for each one of them; and to that somebody the one he or she likes best—and to all our friends the volume in general—is respectfully dedicated by

Their Obedient Servants,

C. A. M. & Co.

THE LONG AGO.

H! a wonderful stream is the river of Time,
As it runs through the realms of tears,
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,
And a broader sweep, and a surge sublime,
And blends with the ocean of years.

How the winters are drifting like flakes of snow,
And the summers like buds between,
And the year in the sheaf—so they come and they go,
On the river's breast, with its ebb and flow,
As it glides in the shadow and sheen.

There's a magical isle up the river of Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime,
And the Junes with the roses are straying.

And the name of this isle is the Long Ago,
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of snow,
There are heaps of dust, but we loved them so!
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of an infant's prayer;
There's a lute unswept, and a harp without strings,
There are broken vows and pieces of rings,
And the garments that SHE used to wear.

There are hands that are waved when the fairy shore
By the mirage is lifted in air;
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh! remembered for aye be that blessed isle,
All the days of life until night,
When the evening comes with its beautiful smile,
And our eyes are closing in slumber awhile,
May that "Greenwood" of soul be in sight.

On the Banks of the Beautiful River.

LIKE a foundling in slumber the summer-day lay,
On the crimsoning threshold of Even,
And I thought that the glow from the "azure-arched" way,
Was a glimpse of the coming of heaven.
There together we sat by the beautiful stream;
We had nothing to do but to love and to dream
In the days that have gone on before.
These are not the same days, though they bear the same name
With the ones I shall welcome no more!

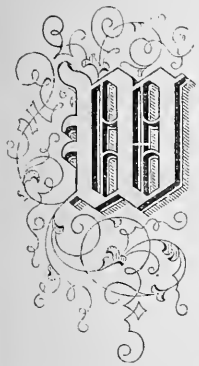
But it may be the angels are calling them o'er,
For a Sabbath and summer forever,
When the years shall forget the Decembers they wore,
And the shroud shall be woven, no, never!
In a twilight like that, Jenny June for a bride,
Oh, what more of the world could one wish for beside?
As we gazed on the river enrolled,
Till we heard, or we fancied, its musical tide,
As it flowed through the gate-way of gold.

"Jenny June," then I said, "let us linger no more
On the banks of the beautiful river;
Let the boat be unmoored, and be muffled the oar,
And we'll steal into Heaven together.
If the angel on duty our coming descries,
You have nothing to do but throw off the disguise
That you wore when you wandered with me,
And the sentry shall say, 'Welcome back to the skies,
We have long been a-waiting for thee.'"

Oh, how sweetly she spoke ere she uttered a word,
With that blush partly hers, partly Even's;
And that tone like the dream of a song we once heard,
As she whispered, "that way is not Heaven's;
For the river that runs by the realms of the blest
Has no song in its ripple, no star on its breast—
Oh, that river is nothing like this!
For it glides on in shadow, beyond the world's west,
Till it breaks into beauty and bliss!"

I am lingering yet, but I linger alone,
On the banks of the beautiful river;
'Tis the TWIN of that day, but the wave where it shone,
Bears the willow-tree's shadow forever!

THE OLD CANOE.



HERE the rocks are gray and the shore is steep,
And the waters below look dark and deep,
Where the rugged pine in its gloomy pride
Leans gloomily over the murky tide,
Where the reeds and the rushes are tall and rank,
And the weeds grow thick on the winding bank,
Where the shadow is heavy the whole day through,
Lies at its moorings the old canoe.

The useless paddles are idly dropped,
Like a sea bird's wings that the storm hath lopped,
And crossed on the railing one o'er one,
Like folded hands when the work is done;
While busily back and forth between
The spider stretches his silvery screen,
And the solemn owl, with his dull "too-hoo,"
Nestles down on the side of the old canoe.

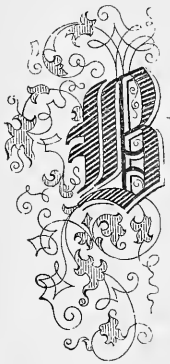
The stern half sunk in the slimy wave,
Rots slowly away in its living grave,
And the green moss creeps o'er its dull decay,
Hiding the mouldering dust away,
Like the hand that plants o'er the tomb a flower,
Or the ivy that mantles a fallen tower;
While many a blossom of liveliest hue
Springs up o'er the stern of the old canoe.

The currentless waters are dead and still;
But the light winds play with the boat at will,
And lazily in and out again,
It floats the length of its rusty chain,
Like the weary march of the hands of time,
That meet and part at the noontide chime;
And the shore is kissed at each turn anew
By the dripping bow of the old canoe.

Oh, many a time with a careless hand
I have pushed it away from the pebbly strand,
And paddled it down where the stream ran quick—
Where the whirls were wild and the foam was thick;
And laughed as I leaned o'er the rocking side,
And looked below in the broken tide,
To see that the faces and boats were two,
That were mirrored back from the old canoe.

But now, as I lean o'er the crumbling side,
And look below in the sluggish tide,
The face that I see is graver grown,
And the laugh that I hear has a sober tone,
And the hands that lent to the light skiff wings
Have grown familiar with sterner things;
But I love to think of the hours that flew
As I rocked where the whirls their wild spray threw,
Ere the blossoms waved or the green grass grew
O'er the mouldering stern of the old canoe.

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY



BY the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue;
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the laurel, the Blue;
Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the roses, the Blue;
Under the lilies, the Gray.

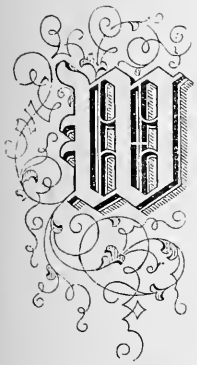
So with an equal splendor
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Broidered with gold, the Blue;
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So when the Summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Wet with the rain, the Blue;
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done;
In the storms of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue;
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war-cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Love and tears for the Blue;
Tears and love for the Gray.

TRUE WORTH.



WHO shall judge a man from manners?
Who shall know him by his dress?
Paupers may be fit for princes,
Princes fit for something less.
Crumpled shirt and dirty jacket
May beclothe the golden ore
Of the humblest thoughts and feelings—
Satin vests would do no more.

There are springs of crystal nectar
Ever welling out of stone;
There are purple buds and golden,
Hidden, crushed and overthrown;
God who counts by souls, not dresses,
Loves and prospers you and me,
While he values thrones the highest,
But as pebbles in the sea.

Man, upraised above his fellows,
Oft forgets his fellows then;
Masters, rulers, lords, remember
That your meanest hands are men—
Men by labor, men by feeling,
Men by thought, and men by fame,
Claiming equal rights to sunshine,
In man's ennobling name.

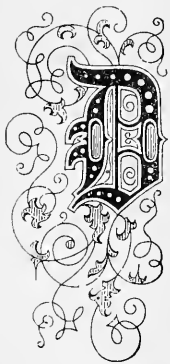
There are foam-embroidered oceans,
There are little reed-clad rills,
There are feeble, inch-high saplings,
There are cedars on the hills;
God, who counts by souls, not stations,
Loves and prospers you and me;
For to him, all vain distinctions
Are as pebbles in the sea.

Toiling hands alone are builders
Of a nation's wealth or fame;
Titled laziness is pensioned,
Fed and fattened on the same;
By the sweat of others' foreheads,
Living only to rejoice,
While the poor man's outraged freedom
Vainly lifteth up its voice.

Truth and justice are eternal,
Born with loveliness and light,
Secret wrongs shall never prosper,
While there is a sunny right;
God, whose world-heard voice is singing
Boundless love to you and me,
Sinks oppression with its titles,
As the pebbles of the sea.

QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

[MARIAN, SIX YEARS OLD]



O angels wear white dresses, say,
Always, or only in the summer? Do
Their birthdays have to come like mine, in May?
Do they have scarlet sashes then, or blue?

"When little Jessie died last night,
How could she walk to heaven—it is so far?
How did she find the way without a light?
There wasn't even any moon or star.

"Will she have red or golden wings?
Then will she have to be a bird, and fly?
Do they take men like presidents and kings
In hearses with black plumes clear to the sky?

"How old is God? Has he gray hair?
Can he see yet? Where did he have to stay
Before—you know—he had made—Anywhere?
Who does He pray to—when he has to pray?

"How many drops are in the sea?
How many stars?—well, then, you ought to know
How many flowers are on an apple-tree?
How does the wind look when it doesn't blow?

"Where does the rainbow end? And why
Did—Captain Kidd—bury the gold there? When
Will this world burn? And will the firemen try
To put the fire out with the engines then?

"If you should ever die, may we
Have pumpkins growing in the garden, so
My fairy godmother can come for me,
When there's a prince's ball, and let me go?

"Read Cinderella just once more———
What makes—men's other wives—so mean?" I know
That I was tired, it may be cross, before
I shut the painted book for her to go.

Hours later, from a child's white bed
I heard the timid, last queer question start:—
"Mamma, are you—my stepmother?" it said.
The innocent reproof crept to my heart.

PLAYING AT COURTING.

LET'S play at courting, little wife—
Forget these boys and girls,
Ignore the wrinkles on our brows,
The gray hairs 'mid our curls.

"Me, John, across the field you see,
With Sunday-suit bedight;
You at the glass push back your hair,
And smooth your apron white.

"You hum above your work, while loud
And quick your heart beats on;
And yet unconscious look, as if
There never was a John.

"Well, I am there: I dare not kiss
The little hand I touch;
It seems, just sitting by your side,
Almost one joy too much.

"And, as your shining needles move,
'Tis bliss enough to see
The downcast lashes sometimes lift,
To steal a glance at me.

"The neighbors shy look in sometimes—
I do not call them here;
I'd rather not, to tell the truth,
Have anybody near.

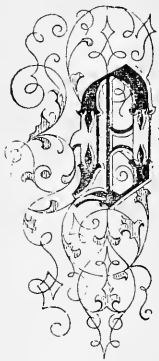
"The old folks bid a pleased good-night,
And leave us two together—
To think, and blush, and nothing say,
Except, 'Tis pleasant weather.'

"But some way, by-and-by (how is't?
I never could define.)
My hand gets snuggling round your waist,
And yours get clasped in mine.

"And some way, stranger still, your cheek
Comes very near my own;
For thus I bend my head, to hear
That bashful, whispering tone—

"And then"—wife nudged me—Close behind,
Eyes opened wide to see,
Our eldest stood—she's just the age
Her mother married me.

THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY



H! to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
Where the angel voices mingle and the angel harpers ring,
To be free from pain and sorrow,
And the anxious dread to-morrow,
To rest in light and sunshine in the presence of the King.

Oh! to be over yonder!
My yearning heart grows fonder
Of looking to the east, to see the day-star bring
Some tidings of the waking,
The cloudless, pure day breaking.
My heart is yearning—yearning for the coming of the King.

Oh! to be over yonder,
Alas! I sigh and wonder,
Why clings my poor weak heart to any earthly thing?
Each tie of earth must sever,
And pass away forever;
But there's no more separation in the presence of the King.

Oh! to be over yonder,
The longing groweth stronger;
When I see the wild doves cleave the air on rapid wing,
I long for their fleet pinions,
To reach my Lord's dominions,
And rest my weary spirit in the presence of the King.

Oh! to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
Where life, and light, and sunshine, beam fair on everything;
Where the day-beam is unshaded,
As pure as He who made it,—
The land of cloudless sunshine, where Jesus is the King.

Oh! when shall I be dwelling
Where the angel voices swelling
In triumphant hallelujahs, make the vaulted heavens ring;
Where the pearly gates are gleaming,
And the morning star is beaming;
Oh! when shall I be yonder in the presence of the King?

Oh! when shall I be yonder?
The longing groweth stronger
To join in all the praises the redeemed ones do sing,
Within these heavenly places,
Where the angels veil their faces,
In awe and adoration in the presence of the King.

Oh! soon, soon I'll be yonder,
All lonely as I wander;
Yearning for the welcome summer—longing for the Lord's fleet wing.
The midnight may be dreary,
And the heart be worn and weary,
But there's no more shadow yonder in the presence of the King.

SEPTEMBER.

SWEET is the voice that calls
From babbling water-falls,
In meadows where the downy seeds are flying;
And soft the breezes blow,
And eddying come and go,
In faded gardens where the rose is dying.

Among the stubbled corn
The blithe quail pipes at morn,
The merry partridge drums in hidden places.
And glittering insects gleam
Above the reedy stream
Where busy spiders spin their filmy laces.

At eve cool shadows fall
Across the garden wall,
And on the clustered grapes to purple turning;
And pearly vapors lie
Along the eastern sky
Where the broad harvest-moon is redly burning.

Ah, soon on field and hill
The winds shall whistle chill,
And patriarch swallows call their flocks together
To fly from frost and snow,
And seek for lands where blow
The fairer blossoms of a balmier weather.

The pollen-dusted bees
Search for the honey-lees
That linger in the last flowers of September;
While plaintive, mourning doves
Coo sadly to their loves
Of the dead summer they so well remember.

The cricket chirps all day,
"O, fairest summer, stay!"
The squirrel eyes askance the chestnuts browning;
The wild-fowl fly afar
Above the foamy bar,
And hasten southward ere the skies are frowning.

Now comes a fragrant breeze
Through the dark cedar trees,
And round about my temples fondly lingers
In gentle playfulness,
Like to the soft caress
Bestowed in happier days by loving fingers.

Yet, though a sense of grief
Comes with the falling leaf,
And memory makes the summer doubly pleasant,
In all my autumn dreams
A future summer gleams,
Passing the fairest glories of the present!

HEARTSEASE.

OF all the bonny buds that blow
In bright or cloudy weather,
Of all the flowers that come and go
The whole twelve moons together,
This little purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the sweetest, saddest things.

I had a little lover once,
Who used to give me posies:
His eyes were blue as hyacinths,
His lips as red as roses,
And everybody loved to praise
His pretty looks and winsome ways.

The girls that went to school with me
Made little jealous speeches,
Because he brought me royally
His biggest plums and peaches,
And always at the door would wait
To carry home my books and slate.

"They couldn't see"—with pout and fling—
"The mighty fascination
About that little snub-nosed thing
To win such admiration;
As if there weren't a dozen girls
With nicer eyes and longer curls!"

And this I knew as well as they,
And never could see clearly
Why more than Marion or May
I should be loved so dearly.
So once I asked him, why was this?
He only answered with a kiss.

Until I teased him—"Tell me why—
I want to know the reason;"
When from the garden-bed close by,
(The pansies were in season)
He plucked and gave a flower to me,
With sweet and simple gravity.

"The garden is in bloom," he said,
"With lilies pale and slender,
With roses and verbenas red,
And fuchias' purple splendor;
But over and above the rest,
This little heartsease suits me best."

"Am I your little heartsease, then?"
I asked with blushing pleasure:
He answered yes! and yes again—
Heartsease, and dearest treasure;
That the round world and all the sea
Held nothing half so sweet as me!

I listened with a proud delight
Too rare for words to capture,
Nor ever dreamed what sudden blight
Would come to chill my rapture,
Could I forsee the tender bloom
Of pansies round a little tomb.

Life holds some stern experience,
As most of us discover,
And I've had other losses since
I lost my little lover;
But still this purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the saddest, sweetest things.

DRIFTING.

MY soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My winged boat,
A bird afloat,
Swims round the purple peaks remote.

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets in their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw
Through deeps below
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty rim,
With outstretched hands,
The grey smoke stands,
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates,
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Floats swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls,
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals,
At peace I lie
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
A cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where summer sings and never dies,
O'erveiled with vines,
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gamboling with the gamboling kid,
Or down the walls
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rocks like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, white sands beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep barque goes
Where traffic blows
From lands of sun to lands of snows;
This happier one
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

Oh, happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
Oh, happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more,
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its wild uproar!
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

THE GANOID.

A Tail of Long Ago.

WITH a biscuit in my pocket and a hammer in my hand,
Chipping bits from off the strata that were "eropping" o'er the land,
Wearied out, at length I rested by a fracture fresh and new,
And gazed in languid humor at the thing it brought to view;
I had found an ancient easket that Agassiz e'en would hail,
When he saw beneath its cover that a ganoid eurled his tail.

It was lying half imbedded in its matrix in the stone,
And scintillating round it, bright micaceous fragments shone;
And I thought of all the weary, sad, and slow-revolving years
Since the earth commeneed her cireling search for light among the spheres,
And the huge iehthyosaurus must have felt his courage fail
In the turbulence around him when this ganoid curled his tail.

When from out the turbid ocean seethed an atmosphere of steam,
And the waves refused in darkness to reflect a single beam,
And barren rocks, that dimly rose, like spectres, from the waste,
Glared grimly for a little while, and disappeared in haste;
Melted down with heat and horror—even gneiss could not prevail
In those liquidating eras when this ganoid curled his tail.

Check the onward march of Nature, and reverse the wheels of Time,
From the morn when Eden blossomed in its freshness and its prime;
Roll it backward, roll it backward—backward still, and backward more
Through cycles till the effort strains the mind till it is sore,
Still a nebula beyond you, down within the Past's dim vale,
Are those years unchronologic when this ganoid curled his tail.

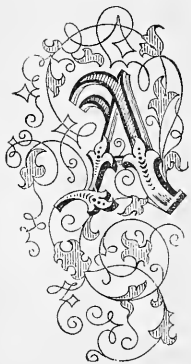
And I thought of all the struggles that we make with such ado
To preserve our names from sinking for a century or two;
How the deeds of warrior, poet, stern philosopher or sage,
Are writ in brilliant letters on the Past's historic page;
And yet the years the best have won are but a fabric frail
By the grand unnumbered eras when this ganoid curled his tail.

You're satisfied with glory, and you think the thing is done—
If you perish in the conflict—when a marble bust is won.
Here's a rival—look upon him—he is not a carved ideal,
For a lime infusion keeps him still original and real.
The antiseptic properties of Fame would prove but frail
Had you done your deeds of wonder when this ganoid curled his tail.

Perhaps in scaly armor, up and down those ancient seas,
Roamed he, with a restless appetite that nothing could appease,
Crushing shoals and hosts of beings, every one of which that ran
Would, in course of time and season, have "developed" up to man;
But "FATA SIC PROFULGENT," and we only may bewail
Our dear relations slaughtered when this ganoid curled his tail.

But it is a sad reflection—sad and stern enough for tears.
To know that blood and carnage trail along the track of years;
That Love, and Peace, and Mercy had not even then began
To sow the seeds of quiet for the future coming man,
And the cries of God's first creatures were a universal wail,
Of fierce and brutal conflict when this ganoid curled his tail.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE.



dreary place would be this earth
Were there no little people in it;
The song of life would lose its mirth,
Were there no children to begin it.

No little forms like buds to grow,
And make the admiring heart surrender;
No little hands on breast and brow,
To keep the thrilling love-chords tender.

No babe within our arms to leap,
No little feet toward slumber tending;
No little knee in prayer to bend,
Our lips to theirs the sweet words lending.

What would the ladies do for work,
Were there no pants or jackets tearing;
No tiny dresses to embroider;
No cradle for their watchful caring?

No rosy boys at wintry-morn,
With satchel to the school-house hasting;
No merry shouts as home they rush;
No precious morsel for their tasting.

Tall, grave, grown people at the door,
Tall, grave, grown people at the table;
The men on business all intent,
The dames lugubrious as they're able.

The sterner souls would get more stern,
Unfeeling natures more inhuman;
And men to stoic coldness turn,
And woman would be less than woman.

Life's song indeed would lose its charm,
Were there no babies to begin it;
A doleful place this world would be,
Were there no little people in it.

NOT KNOWING.

know not what will befall me! God hangs a mist o'er my eyes;
And o'er each step of my onward path he makes new scenes to rise;
And every joy he sends me comes as a sweet and glad surprise.

I see not a step before me as I tread the days of the year;
But the Past is still in God's keeping; the Future his mercy shall clear;
And what looks dark in the distance may brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreaded Future has less bitterness than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the water before I stoop to drink;
Or, if Marah must be Marah, he will stand beside its brink.

It may be there is waiting for the coming of my feet,
Some gift of such rare blessedness, some joy so strangely sweet,
That my lips can only tremble with the thanks I cannot speak.

O restful, blissful Ignorance! 'Tis blessed not to know!
It keeps me quiet in those arms which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest on the bosom which loves me so.

So I go on, not knowing! I would not if I might;
I would rather walk in the dark with God, than go alone in the light;
I would rather walk with him by faith than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials which the Future may disclose,
Yet, I never had a sorrow but what the dear Lord chose;
So I send the coming tears back with the whispered words, "He knows."

A SONG OF A NEST.

THERE was once a nest in a hollow—
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed—
Soft and warm, and full to the brim;
Vetches leaned over it, purple and dim,
With butter-cup buds to follow.

I pray you, hear my song of a nest,
For it is not long;
You shall never light in a sunnier quest
The bushes among—
Shall never light on a prouder sitter—
A fairer nestful—nor ever know
A softer sound than their tender twitter,
That, wind-like, did come and go.

I had a nestful, once, of my own—
Ah! happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them; but when they were grown,
They spread out their wings to fly.

O! one after one they flew away,
Far up in the heavenly blue—
To the better country, the upper day,
And—I wish I was going, too!

I pray you, what is the nest to me—
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the West?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hopes have failed?

Nay! but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be—
There is the home where my thoughts are sent—
The only home for me.

Leaves that are Fairest.

LEAVES that are fairest
Soonest decay,
Loved ones the rarest
Soon pass away;
Smiles that are brightest
Soonest grow cold,
Tales that are lightest
Soonest are told.

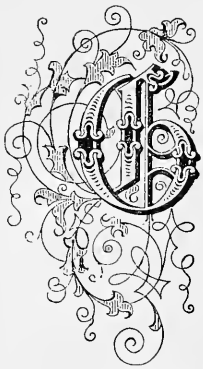
But the leaf and the tale give us joy while they last,
And the smile of a friend makes a joy of the past;
For memory preserves in its tender embrace
The sunbeams of life as they flashed on his face.

Fortunes the proudest
Fly with the years,
Laughter the loudest
Softens to tears.

Joys the completest
Last but an hour,
Perfumes the sweetest
Die with the flower.

But why should we sigh for the joys that have fled,
Or mourn the fond hopes that are lost with the dead?
Fresh hopes and new joys coming seasons will bring,
As perfumes will return with the roses of Spring.

GOOD-BY.



GOD be with you! through my losing
And my grieving, shall I say?
Through my smiling and my hoping—
God be with you, friends, to-day!

Somewhere, on a shore of silver,
(God be with you on the way!)
In a sunlight sifted richly
From a thousand skies of May.

In the meanings of the sunrise,
In the soul of summer rain,
In the heart of purple hazes,
We will not say Good-by again.

But the tears dash through my dreaming,
And the thing I fain would say,
Falters into this—this only;
God be with you till that day!

HOW STRANGE.

OW strange it will be, love, how strange, when we two
Shall be what all lovers become,
You, frigid and faithless, I cold and untrue,
You thoughtless of me, and I careless of you,
Our pet names grown rusty with nothing to do,
Love's bright web unravelled, and rent, and worn through,
And life's loom left empty—ah, hum!
Ah, me,
How strange it will be!

How strange it will be when the witchery goes,
Which makes me seem lovely to-day;
When your thought of me loses its COULEUR DE ROSE,
When every day serves some new fault to disclose,
When you find I've cold eyes and an every day nose,
And wonder you could for a moment suppose
I was out of the commonplace way;
Ah, me,
How strange it will be.

How strange it will be, love—how strange when we meet,
With just a chill touch of the hand!
When my pulses no longer delightedly beat
At the thought of your coming, the sound of your feet,
When I watch not your going, far down the long street,
When your dear, loving voice, now so thrillingly sweet,
Grows harsh in reproach or command;
Ah, me,
How strange it will be.

How strange it will be when we willingly stay
Divided the weary day through!
Or, getting remotely apart as we may,
Sit chilly and silent, with nothing to say,
Or cooly converse on the news of the day
In a wearisome, old married folks sort of way!
I shrink from the picture; don't you?
Ah, me,
How strange it will be!

Dear love, if our hearts DO grow torpid and old,
As so many others have done;
If we let our love perish with hunger and cold,
If we dim all life's diamonds and tarnish its gold,
If we choose to live wretched and die unconsoled,
'Twill be strangest of all things that ever were told
As happening under the sun!
Ah, me,
How strange it WILL be!

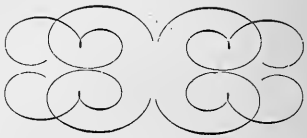
One of the Sweet Old Chapters.

ONE of the sweet old chapters,
After a day like this;
The day brought tears and trouble,
The evening brings no kiss.

No rest in the arms I long for—
Rest and refuge and home;
Grieved, and lonely, and weary,
Unto the Book I come.

One of the sweet old chapters,
The love that blossoms through
His care of the birds and lilies,
Out in the meadow dew.

His evening lies soft around them;
Their faith is simply to be.
O, hushed by the tender lesson,
My God, let me rest in thee!



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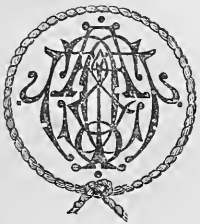

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